

 IT'S A  
BLOG!

## Four decades between Thatcher and Gillard, but has much changed for?

*Sheree Young, ProPrint Editor*

The late Margaret Thatcher and Julia Gillard may not have shared the same political viewpoints, but they both experienced critiques of their appearance - despite them becoming first female prime ministers four decades apart.

Why is it that a woman's appearance is one of the first things to be consciously or unconsciously assessed when she speaks? The shape of her nose, the flick of her hair, the colour she is wearing are all considered and play their part in forming a view of this person, all before a single word is uttered.

### **WHY DO NONE OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS POP-UP WHEN A MAN STANDS UP AND SPEAKS?**

I thought we were getting somewhere with this until a few weeks ago I watched Julia Gillard speak in a one-on-one interview with Hamish McDonald on the ABC's Q&A programme about gender discrimination. Whether we like Julia Gillard or not, it is undeniable that she was assessed on her appearance, her tone of voice and even the fact she was not a mother was questioned.

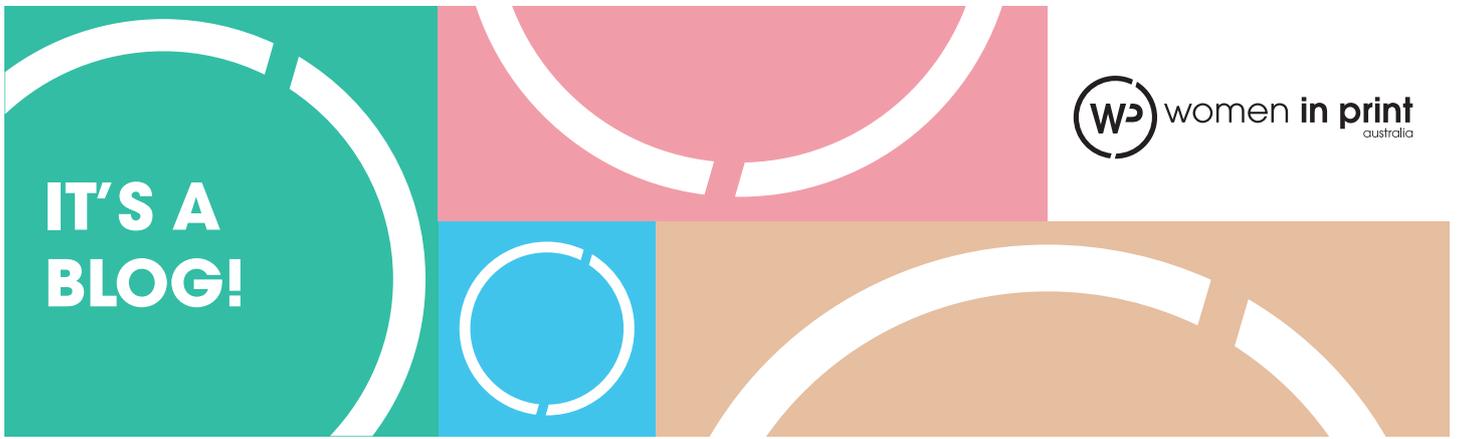
The biggest takeout I got from her appearance on Q&A was that gender discrimination must be called out straight away and nipped in the bud. The concept of just laughing it off and hoping it will go away just does not work, she learned.

Then, later in that same week, I watched *The Iron Lady*, a brilliant biopic about Margaret Thatcher. Again, whether you like or dislike Maggie, she did have quite a lot to say and was in power in the UK from 1975 to 1990.

What struck me was that when Margaret Thatcher was pushing within the Conservative Party to be elevated to leader, it was her clothes, her hair and her tone of voice that was analysed, criticised and ultimately altered. None of which had absolutely anything to do with what she was actually saying if the movie's depiction is correct.

So, how can two women leaders that were in power over four decades apart have faced the same issues? What does this say about women and how women are seen and perceived?





## HAS ANYTHING REALLY CHANGED?

More and more women are now sitting on boards of Australian publicly listed company but there are still some boards that are woman-less and therefore missing out on the perspective women bring to an organisation and its culture. There are more and more women popping up as CEOs and managing directors and this is to be commended.

One can only hope that this rate of women on boards and in leadership increases and with that less and less focus is on what these women of courage and strength are wearing, but more about what they are actually saying.

## SOME MAY QUESTION WHY WOMEN IN PRINT IS RELEVANT.

Indeed, one commenter to a news story I wrote for Sprinter.com.au about the new-look Women in Print asked what would happen if there was a Men in Print organisation created.

Having a safe space like Women in Print for women to talk openly, network, ask questions no matter how silly they may perceive them to be, is something to be cherished, honoured and supported.

I was invited to write this blog post in the same week I watched Q&A and The Iron Lady so I thought I would write about this issue.

I hope you have enjoyed the read and more importantly I hope you all get something out of the Women in Print initiative.

I fully commend all the State patrons and Board officers for their hard work on this. Walking into a printing event can be disconcerting due to the number of grey or black suits you see.

I attended my first Women in Print breakfast last year in Sydney and I have to say I was delighted by it all and look forward to when we can all get back together in person. How wonderful that the women of this industry have this kind of support.

Embrace it and go well.

## About the author

Deborah Corn is the Intergalactic Ambassador to The Printerverse™ at Print Media Centr, a Print Buyerologist™, industry speaker and blogger, host of Podcasts from The Printerverse, cultivator of Print Production Professionals the #1 print group on LinkedIn, Head Girl in Charge (H.G.I.C.) at GirlsWhoPrint, host of #PrintChat every Wednesday at 4PM ET on Twitter, the founder of International Print Day and the founder of #ProjectPeacock. She is the recipient of several industry honors including the 2016 Girls Who Print Girlie Award and sits on the boards of the Advertising Production Club of NYC and The Magazine Innovation Center at the University of Mississippi.